A SHORT ACCOUNT OF THE DEATH OF Mrs. Mary Hutton, OF SUNDERLAND,

Who died Feb. 24, 1777.

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The SECOND EDITION.

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PREFACE.

THE following Account of the happy Death of Mrs. HUTTON, was taken with a view to be read to the congregation aſſembled to hear her funeral ſermon, and is now printed, at the requeſt of ſome who heard it, in hopes it may be a means of animating thoſe who will be at the pains of reading it with prayer, to ſeek that experience in religion which ſhe had, that they may live as ſhe did, and die in ſimilar peace and triumph.—To ſee a poor, weak and frail creature, emaciated by ſickneſs, racked with pain, and aſſaulted by the powers of darkneſs, ſo ſupported by the grace of God, as to ſmile in the face of grim death, rejoice in the ruins of nature, and ſing ſongs of victory in the very jaws of deſtruction—has always appeared to me peculiarly ſtriking, and an evidence of the truth of Chriſtianity, little leſs convincing than the reſurrection of Lazarus.—A matter thus ſtriking, an evidence thus convincing, I have lately had the opportunity of ſeeing daily with great pleaſure and ſatisfaction; and what I ſaw and heard, I chearfully declare to others, that

they too may partake of the ſame happineſs. Only, as there is a wide difference between reading a cold relation of a thing in a book, and the actual beholding it with our eyes; ſo I hardly expect this account (given perhaps unfeelingly enough) however juſt and true, to make ſuch an impreſſion as the affair itſelf made upon the minds of moſt that were eye-witneſſes of it. I cannot give the ink and paper, or the words and ſentences, the ſerene countenance, affecting voice, and reviving looks of this dying ſaint: I cannot animate them with her ſpirit, her zealous, loving and joyful ſpirit; nor can I clothe them with her behaviour, her patient, compoſed and edifying behaviour. No, nor can I enliven my ſtory with all or half her gracious ſayings. Many things ſhe uttered before I ſaw her, worthy of remembrance, of which her friends had taken no account, and many things ſhe ſaid afterwards, which neither I, nor thoſe about her could recollect. But the few things I could remember myſelf, or obtain from others, I ſet down, and here offer to the peruſal of the SERIOUS, deſiring they would read this artleſs account with that child-like ſimplicity which ſhould always attend our meditations on the things of God. And may he give it his bleſſing!

Newcaſtle,
March 14, 1777. } JOSEPH BENSON.

A

SHORT ACCOUNT, &c.

MARY HUTTON was piouſly inclined from her childhood, modeſt, humble, courteous, obliging and exemplary in her whole deportment. About twelve years ago (being then twenty years of age) ſhe joined the ſociety, and has been ever ſince a ſteady and uſeful member: only, for five years ſhe reſted too contented (like many profeſſors of religion) in a form of godlineſs without the power, ſatisfying herſelf with an outward regularity of conduct while Chriſt was not revealed in her, *the hope of glory*. But at laſt ſhe was deeply awakened to a ſenſe of her ſpiritual wants, and excited to ſeek the Lord with all her heart. And he (who never ſaid to any penitent ſouls, "ſeek ye me in vain") ſoon manifeſted himſelf to her. She herſelf told me a few days ago, it was ſeven years ſince ſhe firſt received a clear manifeſtation of the love of God, and that ſince then ſhe had in general walked in the light of his countenance, having never entirely loſt her hold on the promiſes, or her confidence in a pardoning God.

2. After ſhe had her firſt child, about five years ſince, ſhe fell into a very bad ſtate of health, ſo that her recovery was almoſt deſpaired of; but God had pity upon her weeping friends (her mother and huſband eſpecially, who were unwilling to part with her) and reſtored her again. She was then (as I am informed by many who viſited her) exceeding happy

in the love of God: and ſhe then alſo exhorted and encouraged all who came to ſee her, and her converſation was much bleſſed to the edification and comfort of many.—After this ſhe enjoyed a meaſure of health about two years and an half, conſtantly attending the means of grace, eſpecially the private meetings, adorning the goſpel and walking in the comforts of the Holy Ghoſt. To deſcribe her experience in a verſe ſhe often ſung:

Jeſus all the day long
Was her joy and her ſong;
O that all his ſalvation may ſee!
"He hath loved me," ſhe cried,
"He hath ſuffer'd and died,
"To redeem ſuch a rebel as me."

3. About two years ago ſhe begun to relapſe into her former bad ſtate of health, having too many ſymptoms of an approaching conſumption upon her. And notwithſtanding the beſt advice was taken and moſt likely means uſed, her diſorder encreaſed continually (with but few promiſing intervals) till at length it deprived her diſconſolate friends of all hopes of her recovery.—During theſe two laſt years of her life I often viſited and converſed with her, and found her (I think) always ſweetly reſigned to the divine will, ſupported with an hope full of immortality, and no way anxious for life; but rather deſiring to bid adieu to this weary world, that ſhe might be with Jeſus, the beſt beloved of her ſoul. She was greatly refreſhed and comforted with two volumes of hymns publiſhed by Mr. Charles Weſley, which ſhe read much, and which ſhe often mentioned to me with great pleaſure, as having been very uſeful to her. The following verſes particularly pleaſed her, as they ſpoke the very ſentiments of her heart:

Pain, my old companion pain,
Seldom parted from my ſide,
Welcome to thy ſeat again,
Here, if God permits, abide:

Pledge

Pledge of ſure approching eaſe,
Haſte to ſtop my wretched breath;
Rugged meſſenger of peace,
Joyful harbinger of death!
Foe to nature as thou art,
I embrace thee as my friend,
Thou ſhalt bid my grief depart,
Bring me to my journey's end;
Yes, I joyfully decay,
Homeward thro' thy help I haſte,
Thou haſt ſhook the houſe of clay,
Surely it will fall at laſt.

4. It did fall at laſt. But firſt it pleaſed God (who does all things well) to take away two of her children, leaving only one behind (a boy) to comfort her huſband and parents when ſhe is no more! May he be a comfort to them, and may his mother's piety live again in him! She found the death of her children a very trying diſpenſation, for ſhe loved them moſt tenderly, eſpecially the elder, who was an *Iſaac*, a darling child, and who was torn by a kind Providence from his mother's bleeding heart laſt year about this time. The youngeſt died in Auguſt laſt. Thus did her gracious Lord (as ſhe clearly ſaw and owned to me a few days ago) cut or looſen all the cords whereby fleſh and blood had tied her down to this world, that nothing might detain her heaven-born ſoul, when her Father, Friend and Huſband ſhould ſay unto her, "Come up hither!"

5. But I muſt now open a brighter ſcene; a ſcene which (I aſſure you) ſtruck me with awe, and filled me with comfort; ſuch awe as I have rarely felt impreſs my ſpirit, and ſuch comfort as has not often rejoiced my heart! Since I viſited her dying bed, I have often thought on thoſe fine lines of Dr. Young as peculiarly applicable here, and deſcriptive of this ſcene:

"The chamber where the good man meets his fate
"Is privileg'd beyond the common walk
"Of virtuous life, quite in the verge of heaven!"

How

How true this was of her, thoſe will teſtify, who viſited her during the laſt three weeks of her afflicted life. It was but little I ſaw of this glory, (coming rather late) but what I ſaw, I will now endeavour to unfold. What it may be to you, I don't know; nay, it will be nothing to you if God does not bleſs it: but to me it was *Bethel* or Mount *Tabor*. With the diſciples I was ready to ſay, " 'Tis good to be here;" or with Jacob, " This is no other than the houſe of God, and theſe are the very gates of heaven!"—But as we now tread on holy ground, let me addreſs you in the language of the poet laſt quoted:

" Fly ye profane, or elſe draw near with awe,
" Receive the bleſſing and adore the chance
" Which caſt in this Bethesda your diſeaſe:
" If unreſtored by this, deſpair a cure."

6. On Wedneſday the twelfth inſtant when I came to Sunderland, hearing ſhe was very ill and not expected to live, I haſtened to ſee her.—When I approached her bed-ſide, I was ſtruck with the ſerenity, joy and glory which appeared on her ſmiling countenance, and hardly knew what to ſay to her. But while I was looking earneſtly upon her, and admiring how ſhe was reduced and emaciated ſince I ſaw her laſt, ſhe prevented me, ſaying, " I thought I ſhould not have lived to ſee you again, but bleſſed be God we have met once more." I ſaid, " Siſter Hutton, I am ſorry to find you ſo poorly." She reply'd, " I am ſorry to hear you ſay you are ſorry: Why ſhould you be ſorry that I am going to leave this wretched world, to be for ever with my Lord and Saviour. I ſee nothing here worth living for; but oh! the love of Jeſus, and the joy there is in his preſence!

" That, that is the fulneſs! but this is the taſte,
" And this I ſhall prove, till with joy I remove
" To the heaven of heavens in Jeſus's love!"

I ſaid,

I ſaid, " You have no doubt or fear but that you ſhall be with him for ever?" " Oh! none, (ſhe anſwered) none. I know in whom I have believed, and he will keep what I commit unto him ſafe unto that day." " Do you believe then (I aſked) that the Lord will finiſh his work before he takes you away?" " I believe (ſhe anſwered) 'tis already finiſhed, and I long to be with him where he is, to behold his glory. O come, Lord Jeſus!" " He is gone (I ſaid) to prepare a place for you, and he will come again and receive you to himſelf, that where he is you may be alſo, and oh! the glory and happineſs you ſhall then enjoy!" At the thoughts of this, ſhe ſeemed quite raviſhed and tranſported, and (as if ſhe already beheld it) with her eyes fixed, and her hands ſtretched out, ſhe ſaid, " Oh! what a ſight! what bliſs and glory!"

7. After a little ſilence, and ſome moments ſpent in meditation on the happineſs of heaven, ſhe ſaid, ſhe bleſſed God that ever ſhe came among the Methodiſts, for the public preaching, and eſpecially the private meetings, had been very uſeful to her all along.—" I ſhall never forget (ſaid ſhe) the love-feaſt we had September laſt. I thought that night my ſoul would have broke through its priſon of clay and flown away to be at reſt in Chriſt. Oh! I was happy! I longed to tell what God had done for me: But alas! a falſe ſhame prevented me; and I am ſorry that it did. But I was always backward to tell the loving-kindneſs of the Lord, for which I aſk pardon of him. But now he hath looſed my tongue and I could ſpeak for ever. I am not afraid nor aſhamed: I could ſpeak before any."

8. After ſome more converſation we ſung an hymn, and ſhe would join with us, ſaying, " I never had any voice, but I always endeavoured to ſing with all my heart, and that is the beſt muſic in the Lord's ears." The verſes we ſung were theſe following; which, as they were exceedingly well ſuited to her ſtate, ſhe read or ſung daily. I here quote them, becauſe

becauſe they ſhew you, better than any thing I can ſay, the ſpirit and temper of this dying ſaint.

1. God of my life, for thee I pine,
For thee, I chearfully decline,
And haſten to decay;
Summon'd to take my place above,
I hear the call, "Ariſe my love,
"My fair one, come away."

2. Obedient to the voice of God,
I ſoon ſhall quit this earthly clod,
Shall lay my body down:
Th' immortal principle aſpires,
And ſwells my ſoul with ſtrong deſires
To graſp the ſtarry crown.

3. The more the outward man decays,
The inner feels thy ſtrengthening grace,
And knows that thou art mine:
Partaker of my glorious hope,
I here ſhall after thee wake up,
And in thine image ſhine.

4. Dear Lamb, if thou for me couldſt die,
Thy love ſhall wholly ſanctify,
Thy love ſhall ſeal me thine:
Thou wilt from me no more depart,
My all in life and death thou art,
Thou art for ever mine!

9. The next morning, about ten o'clock, ſhe ſent for me again, and when I came I underſtood ſhe had been much haraſſed by the enemy in the night. He had ſtrongly ſuggeſted that ſhe had deceived herſelf; and though ſhe did not, could not give up her confidence, yet thro' reaſoning ſhe was brought into much darkneſs, and was much diſtreſſed to find her Lord abſent. She could not reſt in this ſtate, (oh! that we were all like her!) but, toſſing to and fro' upon her bed, cry'd to the Lord all night; till about ſeven in the morning the Lord returned, and ſhe broke out into ſuch an extaſy and rapture that

that it aſtoniſhed all preſent, ſaying, " I have found him, I have found him, my Jeſus eternally mine." She called upon them all to rejoice with her, and join in praiſing the Lord for the great deliverance. This they did in ſinging the two following verſes:

" My pain is reliev'd, my ſorrow is paſt,
And I have receiv'd the bleſſing at laſt,
Recover'd his favour (ſo haraſs'd and toſs'd)
And found in my Saviour the peace I had loſt.

I lift up my voice, to pardon reſtor'd,
And bid you rejoice in Jeſus, my Lord;
I call the oppreſſed, my Saviour to own,
I cannot be bleſſed and happy alone."

10. I found ſhe was ſtill very happy, rejoicing in the Lord, and in hope of his glory. I ſaid " I don't wonder, ſiſter Hutton, that the Lord ſhould permit the enemy to aſſault you: it was for the trial of your faith." She anſwered, " I believe it was; I praiſe him for it: I praiſe him for every thing. He does all things well. I have not ſuffered one moment's pain in vain: it was all neceſſary, and has been all ſanctified." I ſaid, " You now ſee Jeſus altogether lovely." " Oh yes, (ſhe replied) altogether lovely. I long to be with him. I am afraid of impatience, I have ſuch a deſire to be gone. Pray that I may be enabled patiently to wait his time, and may he fill me with all his fulneſs!" Afterwards we ſung an hymn and went to prayer, and ſhe joined with us, as her ſtrength would permit; and when in prayer it was mentioned that " the ſufferings of this preſent time were not worthy to be compared with the glory that ſhall be revealed in us," ſhe could not forbear ſpeaking up (weak as ſhe was) and ſealing the truth with her dying voice, ſaying, " Oh! no! not worthy to be compared indeed!" Before I left her, I ſaid, " Your ſtate, ſiſter Hutton, is rather to be envied than pitied." She ſweetly ſmiled and ſaid, " 'Tis not to be pitied: but I can find few that will rejoice with me, or that partake of my happineſs.

happineſs. I want every body to rejoice and praiſe the Lord on my account."

11. I afterwards learnt from one that was with her all the day, that in the forenoon, her mind was altogether taken up with God and things divine, ſo that ſhe would not be prevailed with to ceaſe ſpeaking to all about her, even beyond her ſtrength. When one deſired her to forbear, and not waſte herſelf by talking ſo much, ſhe reply'd, "Can I ſpend my ſtrength and ſpirits in the ſervice of a better maſter. I know he has done great things for me, and I will praiſe him with my lateſt breath." A friend (who makes little profeſſion of religion) coming to ſee her, and aſking her how ſhe was, ſhe reply'd, "You ſee my poor weak body, which is waſting faſt; yet I aſſure you if it was in my power, I would not change my ſituation for a thouſand worlds. The world can do nothing for a dying ſoul, but make it miſerable. Oh! ſee that you live to God, that it may be well with you at the laſt!"

12. From one o'clock till three ſhe was very weak, expecting every moment her diſſolution, during which time ſhe was magnifying the Lord by lifting up her dying eyes and hands to him, often ſaying, "Oh! precious Jeſus, thou haſt done great things for me! Oh! may I wait patiently till my change come, and chearfully ſuffer all thy righteous will." She continued exceeding weak in body, yet very happy in ſoul, all the afternoon. At nine o'clock a friend came who was to ſit up with her, and began to tell ſome piece of news ſhe had heard. But Mrs. Hutton ſoon interrupted her, ſaying, "O Nanny, don't ſay one word about the world, for I cannot bear it. Tell me about Jeſus: let me hear ſome good news from the promiſed land. I have nothing to do with the world, it is crucified to me and I to it." Unwilling to ſleep, weak as ſhe was, ſhe deſired them to give her the hymn-book into bed, and ſhe read ſeveral hymns, which had been much bleſſed to her ſoul. After ſhe was quite worn out with pain and want

want of reſt, ſhe was obliged to yield to the requeſt of her friends and give them the hymn-book again, only firſt ſhe read the following verſe, very deſcriptive of the deſire of her heart. May it alſo be our deſire when ever we lie down to ſleep!

" But if thou my ſoul require,
'Ere I ſee the morning light,
Grant me, Lord, my heart's deſire,
Perfect me in love to-night.
Finiſh thy great work of love,
Cut it ſhort in righteouſneſs,
Fit me for the realms above,
Change and bid me die in peace!"

13. Next morning (Friday the 14th) when her huſband came to ſee her, ſhe ſaid, " My dear, I have had the happieſt night I ever had in my life. I have been (as it were) in the arms of Jeſus all night. Oh! what comfort I have had with him. Though my body is full of pain, and can find no reſting place, my mind is in perpetual peace." I found, when I went to ſee her, ſhe was ſtill very happy and unwearied in ſpeaking of the goodneſs of God, to all who came to viſit her, as many did this day. Her ſtate of mind at this time is well deſcribed in ſome verſes of an hymn ſhe was very fond of, eſpecially the three following:

My peace, it is made,
My ranſom is paid,
My ſoul on thy bloody atonement is ſtaid.

Not a doubt can ariſe
To darken the ſkies,
Nor hide, for a moment, my Lord from mine eyes.

I already am bleſt,
I lean on thy breaſt,
And lo! in thy wounds I continually reſt.

14. And yet the Lord had much more to do for her, as appears from what follows. For the next day, Saturday, when I went to ſee her, ſhe aſſured

me all ſhe had formerly experienced was nothing in compariſon of what ſhe then enjoyed of his goodneſs. But being exceeding weak in body ſhe was not able to declare it as ſhe would, only ſhe ſaid, and that with a ſolemnity which was very ſtriking, " O bleſſed, for ever bleſſed be his name for the great things he has done for me! I cannot expreſs to you what I feel of his love! Oh! I thought I had loved him before, but it was all nothing! I never loved him till now. Had I a thouſand tongues, and were I to live a thouſand years twice told, I could not declare half of what he has done for me laſt night. Oh! praiſe the Lord on my account." I found her next morning, though weaker than ever before in body, yet ſtill in the ſame diſpoſition of mind, declaring ſhe had hitherto known nothing of religion in compariſon of what ſhe now experienced. " I uſed (ſaid ſhe) to pray for humility, but alas, I knew little what humility meant till the Lord has taught me by this affliction. O bleſſed be his name for this time of ſuffering, through it he has led me into a depth of love and holineſs I knew little of before. I only ſwam (as it were) upon the ſurface of things, but now he has cauſed my ſoul to ſink deep into his grace." I ſaid, " Siſter Hutton, that is the caſe with moſt of us: we know little in compariſon of what we might know." She replied, " It has been my caſe: the Lord took me up upon the mount, and ſhewed me the good land, and I thought I had nothing to do but to paſs over and take poſſeſſion: But oh! what has he done for me within theſe two days! through what a deep, pleaſant and fruitful valley has he led me! What a peace, patience and reſignation has he brought into my ſoul!" Her Huſband told me, ſhe ſpoke but little all Saturday and this morning, only ſhe now and then ſaid, " Moſt precious Jeſus! there is no reſt for this weary body, but my ſoul enjoys a peace in thee that paſſes all underſtanding."

15. On Sunday night, when I went to ſee her, I found, (as ſhe could take nothing but now and then a glaſs

a glaſs of Briſtol water, which had been her only ſupport for ſeveral days) through want of nouriſhment and reſt, ſhe was a little inſenſible at times. In this defenceleſs ſtate ſhe had been much haraſſed by the enemy; but after talking and praying with her, I left her in great peace. And next morning I found ſhe ſtill held faſt her confidence, and longed exceedingly to be diſmiſſed from this weary world, begging I would exhort her friends to give her up, and pray that the Lord would cut ſhort his work in righteouſneſs and take her to himſelf. On Tueſday (the 18th) being obliged to go into the country, I took my leave of her about three in the afternoon, hardly expecting to ſee her again in this world. She had but juſt ſtrength to bid me farewel, and expreſs the hope ſhe had of our meeting again with joy at the great day.

16. I am informed by one preſent at the time, that on Wedneſday afternoon an old lady came to ſee her (with whom ſhe had been ſomewhat intimate) and begun to talk much about the world: Mrs. Hutton, as ſoon as ſhe got a little ſtrength (which ſhe prayed the Lord to give her that ſhe might be able to talk to this perſon about her ſoul) deſiring her to come to the bed-ſide, ſaid, "Dear Mrs. ———, to know the Redeemer is ours, is only worth living for: I aſſure you, I know he is mine, and that he dwells in me. And nothing ſhort of this would now do for me, nor will any thing ſhort of it do for *you*. Oh! ſee that you reſt not without an intereſt in the blood of Chriſt, that you may know God to be reconciled to you." She ſaid many more things to her, and when the old lady went away, the tears ran down her cheeks, and ſhe ſaid, "Oh what ſweet expreſſions ſhe has! We need not mind how ſoon we die, were we but ready like her."—Her leader ſat up with her at night, and they found it a time to be remembered, the Lord bleſſing them all in a more than ordinary manner.

17. Thurſday morning ſhe became very ill, and was generally inſenſible, till Saturday about noon

ſhe came to herſelf, but was ſo very weak that ſhe could not ſpeak to be underſtood, only by the lifting up of her eyes and hands, as well as by the ſerenity and chearfulneſs of her countenance, they perceived ſhe was exceeding happy.—She was ſtill worſe on Sunday, only ſhe had ſtrength to ſay, ſo as to be underſtood, by one at her bed-ſide, "I long to be gone! oh! why, my friends, won't you give me up? It is certainly *you* who keep me from my God."

18. On Sunday evening, after preaching, finding ſhe was ſtill alive, I went to ſee her once more. As ſoon as I came to her bed-ſide, ſhe knew me perfectly, and though ſhe was quite ſpeechleſs, yet ſhe made ſeveral ſigns in anſwer to the queſtions I aſked her, which convinced all preſent her hope was full of immortality! She gave us to underſtand that ſhe deſired we would go to prayer with her, which we did with confidence and joy, commending her ſpirit into his hands who will certainly keep what we commit unto him ſafe unto that day. I left her in a little ſlumber, from which ſhe ſoon waked, and prayed with her hands claſped or lifted up. Thus ſhe continued, till about five in the morning ſhe fell aſleep to wake no more in this world, without a ſigh or groan, apparently in perfect peace, and in the full aſſurance of hope. She retained her ſenſes to the laſt, and when ſhe could no longer praiſe the Lord with her voice, her looks, her ſigns, her quiet patience ſpoke his praiſe!

Happy ſoul! thy days are ended,
All thy ſuffering days below;
Go, by angel guards attended,
To the ſight of Jeſus go!
Waiting to receive thy ſpirit,
Lo! the Saviour ſtands above,
Shews the purchaſe of his merit,
Reaches out the crown of love.

F I N I S.